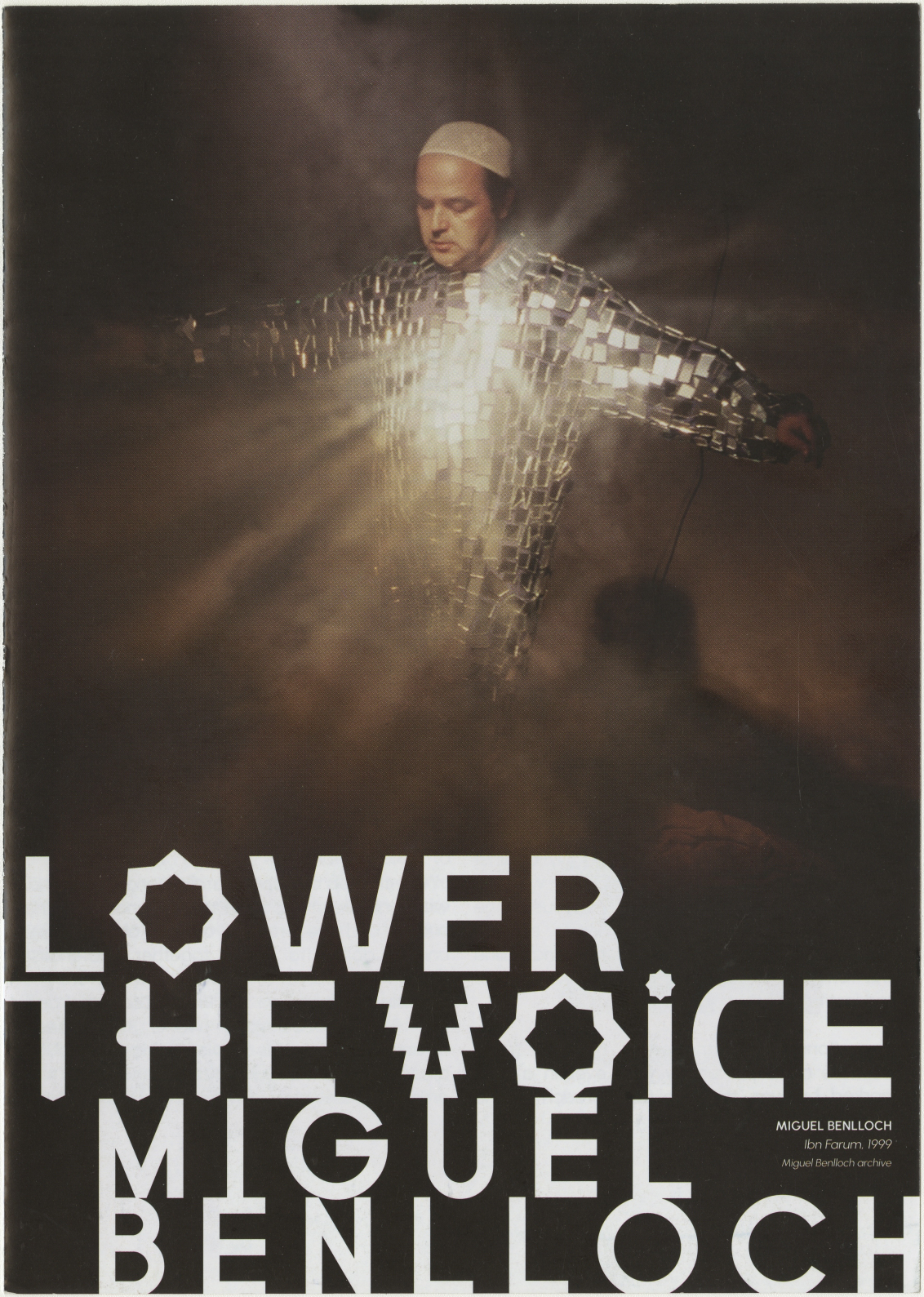


LOWER THE VOICE

MIGUEL BENLLOCH

MIGUEL BENLLOCH
Ibn Farum, 1999
Miguel Benlloch archive

Miguel Benlloch (Loja, 1954 – Seville, 2018) lived at the crossroads of art, life and political militancy, making them into a radical way of inhabiting the world. A "performer", poet, producer and activist, he used his artistic practice to dissolve the boundaries between poetics, politics and his own biography. Always situated yet persistently eccentric, his practice unfolded as an ethics of disquiet: a search to disturb, to displace, to unidentify. He worked through dialogue with other voices, imagining collectivities to come. Sometimes he raised his own voice; at other times he lowered it, allowing "many voices to be heard within that shared space of disidentification."

That *sense of brown*, as performance theorist José Esteban Muñoz described it, was the singular yet shared space that Benlloch inhabited. Throughout his life—whether through participation in various political movements, his performative and musical actions at Granada's Planta Baja, his artistic practice, or his work at the art-and-thought office BNV Producciones- he transformed the everyday into a pursuit of an art that mirrored life itself.

In pursuit of this, he fought-pioneeringly-against all forms of binarism, never losing touch with the historical events that shaped his time. Just as he moved between Granada and Seville, he also moved between Arab and Christian, masculine and feminine, sacred and profane, institutional and instituting.

His actions, often stripped of material form, resonate more powerfully than ever in a time marked by war, the totalitarian reach of the market and its cultural imperatives, the denial of multiplicity and the performative nature of identities, and the resurgence of new forms of fascism.

This exhibition draws its inspiration from Benlloch's approach, adopting curatorial gestures that move beyond the conventions of the white cube. His works and actions are presented non-chronologically and placed in the interstices and liminal spaces of the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo, rather than in the main exhibition halls. They are set in dialogue with the layered histories of a building that, before becoming an art centre, had served as a monastery, factory and barracks. Through this gesture, the exhibition seeks to reveal the tension Benlloch sustained throughout his life with institutional frameworks. Rather than as art objects destined for the market or the museum, his audiovisual works, garments, documents and sound pieces trace the networks and relationships that shaped his practice. The exhibition offers an affective, rather than linear, journey, scattering works across the centre according to the themes that were central to his work.

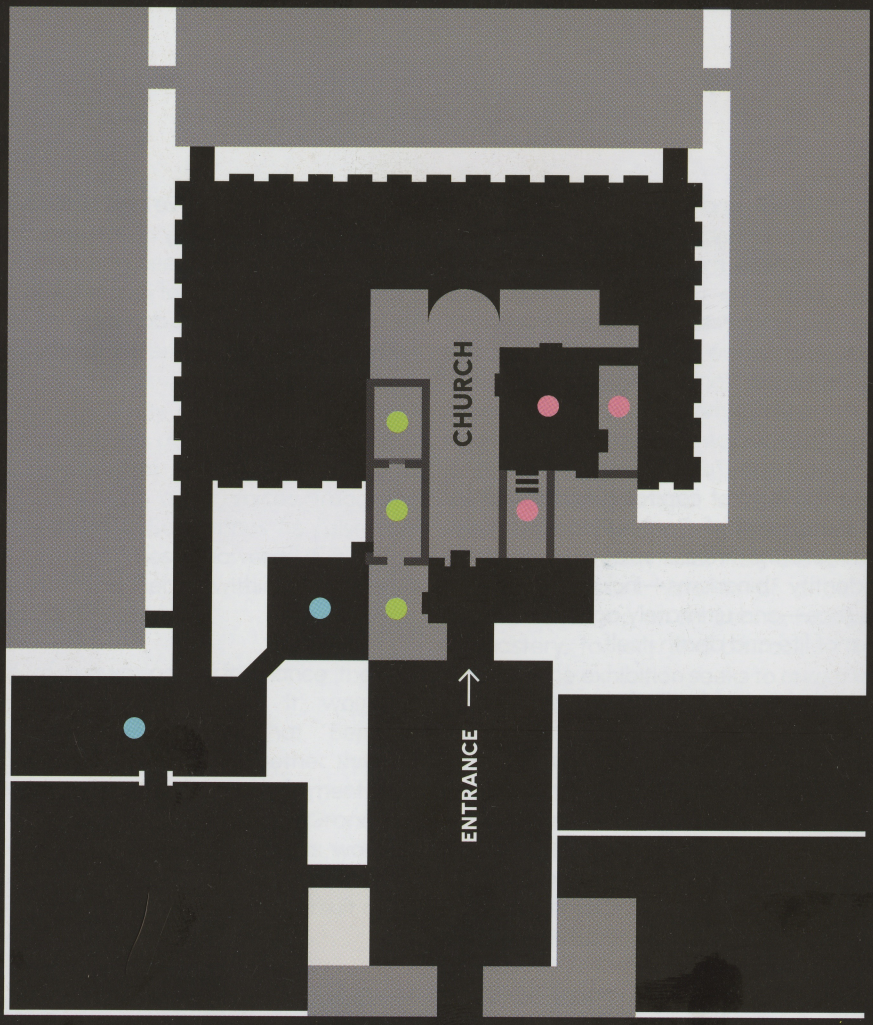
In the chapels of Santa Catalina and San Bruno, we encounter his porous understanding of the sacred and the profane, as well as Benlloch's unique ability to bring together materialist thought with forms of knowledge that were not exclusively rational. In the Prior's Courtyard and the Pergola Courtyard, works have been arranged to reveal his conviction that art and life are inseparable, a foundational principle for the artist, who saw everyday action as the essential

ground of political and artistic practice. The Mudéjar Cloister is conceived as an agora, a public square where the idea of "the people" intertwines with the idea of foreignness, dedicating the space to reflect on Benlloch's constant and attentive engagement with the notion of "otherness" and his ongoing concern with war. In the Cellar, his actions are presented in relation to the idea of clandestinity, as well as to his political and "un-worked" practice, a response to the logic of capitalist accumulation. Finally, in the chapel of Santa Magdalena, his works illuminate the tireless struggle he waged against identity binarisms—including gender, class, and race—and ultimately against the final binary: that of life and death itself.

Lower the Voice. Miguel Benlloch traces a journey through these themes, revealing how the artist's work was pioneering in the intersection of performance art and gender politics in Spain. At the same time, it reasserts the urgency of his actions through the lens of contemporary thought, positioning his practice at the heart of some of today's most pressing debates. Finally, the exhibition aims to transform the centre into a kind of "parasitised ecosystem," following Benlloch's own words: "we make holes to produce movements within power structures. We dig tunnels to interconnect our desires. We generate tension between community and hierarchy."

Throughout the exhibition, wall labels include QR codes linking to the Miguel Benlloch Archive, where further information on each work can be found. First presented in *Miguel Benlloch. Cuerpo conjugado* (CentroCentro, Madrid, 2019), the archive aims to preserve and sustain his creative legacy. It is currently overseen by Joaquín Vázquez, Mar Villaespesa and Manuel Benlloch, with the collaboration of Daniel Villar, and part of its holdings will be donated to the CAAC following the close of the exhibition.

Miguel Benlloch, Disorientation, woodcut, 2022.
Photo: peacock & the worm



SANTA CATALINA
SAN BRUNO

PRIORY COURTYARD
PERGOLA COURTYARD

LITTLE CLOISTER
CELLAR
LA MAGDALENA CHAPEL

OUTDOOR

INNER SPACE

Lower the Voice. Miguel Benlloch is an exhibition dispersed across various spaces within the Centro Andaluz de Arte Contemporáneo.
To help visitors navigate the various spaces housing the artist's works, a map has been created. The route is marked by a series of iridescent spheres, which, like breadcrumbs along a path, guide audiences to the different locations. While this map and trail of spheres serve as an aid, the non-chronological nature of the exhibition encourages a deliberate sense of disorientation, embracing the ideas of drifting and "losing the north," concepts present throughout Benlloch's work. Ultimately, the exhibition invites visitors to understand disorientation as an epistemological tool, one that opens the way to exploring alternative forms of knowledge.

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art hub Bazaló Sevilla Renacimiento